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The Question of Maitreya (1)

Maitreyapariṣcchā

Translated into Tibetan by
Jinamitra · Surendrabodhi · Yeshe Dé

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'phags pa byams pas zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Question of Maitreya”

Āryamaitreyapariṣcchānāmamahāyānasūtra



Toh 85

Degé Kangyur, vol. 44 (dkon brtsegs, cha), folios 104.b–116.b

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ti. Title
- im. Imprint
- co. Contents
- s. Summary
- ac. Acknowledgments
- i. Introduction
- tr. The Translation
 - 1. The Question of Maitreya
- c. Colophon
- ab. Abbreviations
- n. Notes
- b. Bibliography
 - Tibetan texts
 - Other works
- g. Glossary

s.

SUMMARY

- s.1 In *The Question of Maitreya*, the bodhisattva Maitreya asks the Buddha what qualities a bodhisattva needs to attain enlightenment quickly. The Buddha outlines several sets of qualities, foremost among them the altruistic intention of perfect bodhicitta. The Buddha then recounts to Ānanda how, in a former life, Maitreya revered a previous Buddha and, wishing to become just like him, at once realized that all phenomena are unproduced. Ānanda asks why Maitreya did not become a buddha sooner, and in answer the Buddha compares Maitreya's bodhisattva career with his own, listing further sets of qualities that differentiate them and recounting examples of the hardships he himself faced in previous lives. Maitreya, on the other hand, has followed the easy bodhisattva vehicle using its skillful means, such as the seven branch practice and the training in the six perfections; the aspirations he thus made are set out in the famous "Prayer of Maitreya" for which this sūtra is perhaps best known. The Buddha declares that Maitreya will become enlightened when sentient beings have fewer negative emotions, in contrast to the ignorant and turbulent beings he himself vowed to help.

ac.

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i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1 *The Question of Maitreya (Maitreyapariṣcchā)*,¹ like most of the sūtras that comprise the Ratnakūṭa collection, was translated into Tibetan from a Sanskrit original that is now lost, but that may have dated back as far as the first or second centuries CE, i.e., several centuries before the collection itself was compiled. Apart from the Tibetan Kangyur version, translated in the ninth century, and a fragment in Sanskrit found in Central Asia,² the sūtra is extant only in an earlier Chinese translation.

i.2 Both the work translated here and the work that follows it in the collection, *The Question of Maitreya on the Eight Qualities*,³ focus on the important figure of the bodhisattva Maitreya, who is generally accepted as destined to be the future Buddha of this world-system.

i.3 In *The Question of Maitreya*, the Buddha predicts that Maitreya will attain enlightenment due to having applied the skillful means of the Bodhisattva Vehicle (*Bodhisattvayāna*), a synonym for the Mahāyāna. This vehicle, its entry, and its path are described as “easy,” in contrast to the difficulties encountered by the Buddha himself. His hardship is detailed in a passage that is unusual for its portrayal of the harsh rejection of the Buddha and his teachings by some of his contemporaries.

i.4 The sūtra’s stories of the Buddha’s great sacrifices in three of his former lives derive from earlier Jātaka literature. Although influential to some extent in forming the ideal of the bodhisattva, such supreme heroic acts were doubtless too daunting for most people. The reader is led to infer that by following the example of Maitreya future bodhisattvas will be able to attain enlightenment with relative ease. Thus, the sūtra implicitly promotes the Mahāyāna, without devaluing earlier Buddhist traditions.

i.5 The sūtra is probably best known for an aspiration prayer in verse that, the Buddha tells Ānanda, was used by Maitreya six times daily as he was training on the bodhisattva path (F.114.a–F.115.a, see milestones 1.67–1.90). This prayer is widely known as *The Prayer of Maitreya (byams pa’i smon lam)* or

The Sovereign Prayer of Maitreya (*Maitreyapranidhanarāja*, *byams pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*); at least in Tibetan Buddhism, its importance as a general Mahāyāna aspiration prayer is perhaps second only to Samantabhadra's *Prayer of Good Action* (*bzang spyod smon lam*, from the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*), and it is recited daily in many monasteries. The verses are also found as an independent text (but with this sūtra mentioned in the colophon as their source) both in the Dhāraṇī section of the Kangyur (Toh 1096), and in the Tengyur (Toh 4378). Although no Indian commentaries on this prayer are known, it seems to have been recognized as a distinct feature of the sūtra at least as far back as the early translation period, as evidenced by the sūtra's description in the Phangthangma catalogue (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*) as "the longer Noble [Sūtra] of the Question of Maitreya containing the aspiration" (*'phags pa byams pas zhus pa chen po smon lam can*). It is also, presumably, the "Former Prayer that is Truly Noble" that the Buddha gives Ānanda as an alternative title for the sūtra (see 1.95). The prayer is the topic of several commentaries in the Tibetan literature, notably those of Shākya Chokden (*shA kya mchog ldan*, 1428-1507); Drukpa Padma Karpo (*'brug pa pad ma dkar po*, 1527-1592); Tāranātha (*tA ra nA tha*, 1575-1634), who adds comments on the significance of the whole sūtra; Choné Trakpa Shedrup (*co ne grags pa bshad sgrub*, 1675-1748); Ngulchu Dharmabhadra (*dngul chu dhar ma bha dra*, 1772-1851); and Kyedor Khenpo Ngawang Khedrup (*kye rdor mkhan po ngag dbang mkhas grub*, 1779-1838).

- i.6 It is difficult to determine the precise historical relationship of *The Question of Maitreya* with the much shorter sūtra that follows it, *The Question of Maitreya on the Eight Qualities* (Toh 86). Their themes are closely linked—in both, Maitreya questions the Buddha about the bodhisattvas' qualities. However, their geographic settings differ: *The Question of Maitreya* is delivered in a relatively obscure location, Mount Śuśumāra in the country of the Bhargas, while *The Question of Maitreya on the Eight Qualities* is set on Vulture Peak Mountain near Rājagṛha, like many other *Ratnakūṭa* sūtras. The two texts also have different colophons. The translation of the longer sūtra is attributed to Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi, under the editorial supervision of Yeshé Dé, which would date its Tibetan translation to the early ninth century. *The Question of Maitreya on the Eight Qualities*, however, is said to have been translated by Jinamitra and Danaśīla, while Yeshé Dé is said to have corrected it using the revised terminology (*skad gsar*). This may imply a slightly later date for this translation, but could also indicate the existence of an earlier Tibetan translation of *The Question of Maitreya on the Eight Qualities* which required updating in its terminology.

- i.7 Other sūtras in which previous lives of Maitreya are recounted include the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (Toh 113),⁴ *Maitreyapraṣṭhāna* (Toh 198),⁵ and *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* (Toh 556-7). The story of his obtaining the prophecy of his future buddhahood (*vyākaraṇa*) at the time of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin is told in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* (in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*,⁶ the sixth chapter of the *Vinayavastu*, Toh 1)—the same account being found in the non-canonical *Divyāvadāna* collection—and in the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*, a text found in several Sanskrit manuscripts, in a Chinese translation, and in a Tibetan version in the Peking (P 1011) and Narthang Kangyurs, but not included in the Degé Kangyur.
- i.8 These two sūtras in the Ratnakūṭa, which are both often simply called *The Question of Maitreya*, are not to be confused with a third sūtra of the same name in the General Sūtra (*mdo sde*) section, Toh 149, a short work also set in Rajagṛha in which Maitreya asks a quite different question.⁷
- i.9 The main Tibetan text used for the present translation was the Degé edition of the Kangyur. Other Tibetan editions were also consulted but no significant variations were found except for the single one noted.

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra
The Question of Maitreya

1.

The Translation

[F.104.b]

1.1 Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus have I heard at one time. The Blessed One was staying in the Country of the Bhargas, on Mount Śuśumāra in a fearsome forest of wild animals, together with a great saṅgha of about 500 monks, eminent śrāvaka-elders who possessed clairvoyance. These included the omniscient venerable Kauṇḍinya, and the venerables Aśvajit, Vaṣpa, Mahānāman, Bhadrīka, Vimala, Pūrṇa, Gavāṃpati, Mṛgaśīras, Uruvilva Kāśyapa, Nadikāśyapa, Gayākāśyapa, Jaṅghā Kāśyapa, Mahākāśyapa, Amogharāja, Sumati, Śāriputra, the eminent Maudgalyāyana, Parvatarāja, Nanda, Upananda, Ānanda, Rāhula, and so on. [F.105.a]

1.3 Maitreya and 10,000 other bodhisattva mahāsattvas endowed with clairvoyance had also assembled there. These included the bodhisattvas Vardhamānamati, Sumati, Sthiramati, Viśālamati, Pratibhānakūṭa, Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Kusumaśrī, Mañjuśrī, Abhijñāpuṣpa-superipūrṇa, Anupalambhamanasikāra, Prasādavata, Ratnaketu, Indradeva, Varuṇadeva,⁸ Mr̥dusvara, Kṣetraviśodhana, Merukūṭa, Pratibhānasamṣad, Indraśrī, Nimimdhara, Scourer of the Hell-Dwellers, Abandoner of Unfavorable Rebirths, Ratnakesarin, and others.

1.4 The Blessed One, surrounded by this retinue of many hundreds of thousands, surveyed those before him, and taught the Dharma. At that time, the bodhisattva Maitreya was present in that very retinue. He surveyed the great assembly of bodhisattvas, rose from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, set his right knee on the ground, and paid homage with palms joined toward the Blessed One.

1.5 He asked the Blessed One, “Would the Blessed One, if he has time, please answer a certain question that I would like to put to the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely and perfectly enlightened Buddha?”

The Blessed One then replied to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya, “Maitreya, [F.105.b] the Tathāgata always has time to answer such questions. Ask whatever you wish, Maitreya. What I shall say in response to your question will cause you to rejoice.”

- 1.6 So the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how many qualities do bodhisattvas need to possess in order to abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha?”

The Blessed One answered the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya, “Maitreya, you have served the victorious ones of the past, cultivated the roots of virtue, recalled your past lives, acquired eloquence, and for a long time, lived chastely. Maitreya, you work for the benefit of many people, bring happiness to many people, and are compassionate toward the world. You live to bring welfare, benefit, and well-being to ordinary beings, gods, and men, and to assist the noble sons and daughters, present and future, who belong to the vehicle of the bodhisattvas. It is indeed good that you have thought of asking the Blessed One a question on this subject. Therefore, Maitreya, listen well and carefully, and retain all that I say in your mind.”

The bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya assented to the Blessed One, and listened as the Blessed One had instructed.

- 1.7 The Blessed One said, “Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess one single quality, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What is that single quality? Having the altruistic intention [F.106.a] of excellent bodhicitta. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess this single quality, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

- 1.8 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess two qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What two qualities? Thoroughly applying themselves in calm abiding and developing skill in insight. If bodhisattvas possess these two qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

- 1.9 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess three qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What three qualities? Attaining great compassion and having definitive understanding of the teaching of emptiness, yet without being arrogant.

Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these three qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

1.10 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess four qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What four qualities? Observing moral conduct, having no doubt about the whole of the Dharma, delighting in seclusion, and not wavering from the undertaking to which they have committed themselves. [F.106.b] Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these four qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

1.11 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess five qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What five qualities? Dwelling in emptiness, not seeking the delusions of others, investigating the self, delighting in the Dharma, and being committed to helping others. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these five qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

1.12 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess six qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What six qualities? Being without attachment, aversion, and ignorance; immediately answering questions correctly and properly; being tireless in their ritual observance; and experiencing emptiness. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these six qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

1.13 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess seven qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What seven qualities? Being learned in mindfulness and [F.107.a] in the Dharma. Being diligent in their undertakings, joyful, mentally supple, and skilled in meditative concentration and analysis through wisdom. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these seven qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

- 1.14 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess eight qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What eight qualities? Possessing right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.⁹ Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these eight qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.
- 1.15 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess nine qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What nine qualities?
- 1.16 “Maitreya, those bodhisattvas distance themselves from desires and from sinful, non-virtuous things. They investigate, examine, and possess the joy and happiness that arise from solitude. Thus, they accomplish the first meditative absorption and maintain it.¹⁰
- 1.17 “They are free from thinking or examining, and possess inner serenity. Because their mindstreams are one-pointed, they do not think [F.107.b] or examine. Endowed with the joy and happiness that arise from meditative concentration, they then accomplish the second meditative absorption and maintain it.
- 1.18 “Because they are free from attachment to joy, they maintain equipoise and possess mindfulness and awareness. They experience the physical happiness of which the noble ones say, ‘To possess mindfulness and remain in happiness is equanimity.’¹¹ Free of joy they then accomplish the third meditative absorption and maintain it.
- 1.19 “They renounce happiness after already renouncing suffering. Because both mental happiness and mental displeasure decline, there is neither happiness nor suffering. They then accomplish the fourth meditative absorption and maintain it, with immaculate equipoise and mindfulness.
- 1.20 “They transcend conceptions of form in all aspects, and their conceptions of materiality decline. When they do not fabricate conceptions of any kind, they think, ‘This is the infinity of space,’ and then accomplish the sphere of the infinity of space and maintain it. After they have transcended the sphere of the infinity of space in all aspects, they think, ‘This is the infinity of consciousness,’ and then accomplish the sphere of the infinity of consciousness and maintain it. After they have transcended the sphere of the infinity of consciousness in all aspects, they think, ‘This is nothingness,’ and then accomplish the sphere of nothingness and maintain it. After they have transcended the sphere of nothingness in all aspects, they then accomplish

the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception and maintain it. After they have transcended the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception in all aspects, they then accomplish the cessation of perception and feeling and maintain it.¹² Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these nine qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.

1.21 “Furthermore, Maitreya, if bodhisattvas [F.108.a] possess ten qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha. What ten qualities? Having vajra-like meditative concentration, meditative concentration that is assiduous regarding what is correct and incorrect, meditative concentration of going via methods, illuminating meditative concentration, all-illuminating meditative concentration, manifest meditative concentration, precious moon meditative concentration, moon-lamp meditative concentration, meditative concentration without afflictive emotions, and victory-banner final meditative concentration. Maitreya, if bodhisattvas possess these ten qualities, they will abandon all evil rebirths and not fall into the clutches of sinful associates, but swiftly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha.”

1.22 The bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya was then satisfied and delighted. Joyful and pleased, he rose from his seat, draped his shawl over one shoulder, set his right knee on the ground, and bowed to the Blessed One with joined palms. He praised the Blessed One with these fitting verses:

1.23 “In former times, you practiced generous giving.
Giving away dear sons, food and drink,
And even your head and eyes,
You perfected the total generosity of a buddha.

1.24 “For a long time, like a yak its tail,¹³
You observed unimpaired moral conduct.
Peerless in your conduct,
You wholly perfected the conduct of a buddha.

1.25 “You generated the power of patience,
And patiently endured the wrong deeds of ignorant people. [F.108.b]
Possessing all the powers of patience,
You wholly perfected the patience of a buddha.

1.26 “You generated the power of diligence,
Then found unsurpassed peace and happiness.
Powerful due to your diligence,

You wholly perfected the diligence of a buddha.

1.27 “After burning up all sins,
You, great guide and being, took pleasure in your meditation.
Powerful due to the power of meditation,
You wholly perfected the meditation of a buddha.

1.28 “Through wisdom that realizes
That phenomena are by nature empty
And that nothing intrinsically arises,
You reached the other shore and wholly perfected the wisdom of a buddha.

1.29 “Wise One, beneath the Bodhi tree
You subdued clawed demons
And attained the supreme goal.
As the Buddha, you vanquished the evil gathering of demons.

1.30 “Great being, at Vārāṇasī
You turned the wheel of the Dharma.
You terrified the assembly of evil unbelievers,
And, as the Buddha, vanquished the unbelievers’ gatherings.

1.31 “Unsurpassed for your vast wisdom,
Utterly without compare,
You teach the Jewel of the Dharma,
O guide and Buddha, you bring about illumination.

1.32 “You are peerless in generosity,
Strength of moral conduct, patience, and diligence.
You have accomplished the perfection of everything.
You excel, O Buddha, with your many qualities.”

After the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya had praised the Blessed One in verse with such fitting words, he stood to one side.

1.33 The venerable Ānanda then said to the Blessed One, “Lord, Blessed One, it is wonderful that the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya is so supremely eloquent, and that he teaches the Dharma with such words of certainty, that he teaches the Dharma with such matching words and letters, that he teaches the Dharma with such profound words, that he teaches the Dharma with words that explain it so well, [F.109.a] and that he teaches the Dharma with such memorable words.”

1.34 “Exactly, Ānanda,” replied the Blessed One. “It is just as you have said—it is wonderful that the bodhisattva Maitreya is so supremely eloquent, that the bodhisattva Maitreya teaches the Dharma with such words of certainty, and all of what you said, up to his teaching the Dharma with such memorable words. Ānanda, this is not the first time that the bodhisattva Maitreya has praised me with such fitting verses. Why? Formerly, Ānanda, in times gone by, at a time when ten countless ages had passed, there came into the world a tathāgata, arhat, completely and perfectly enlightened buddha, endowed with perfect knowledge and perfect conduct, established in a state of bliss, commanding all worldly knowledge, an unsurpassed guide who converted all beings, a teacher of gods and men, the Buddha Arhat named Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña.¹⁴

1.35 “At that time, there lived a brahmin boy named Bhadrāsuddha, good-looking, handsome, and beautiful to behold, endowed with a supremely good complexion and excellent figure. He was going to a pleasure grove, when between the villages he saw the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely and perfectly enlightened Buddha Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña. The Tathāgata was handsome and charismatic, controlled in his faculties and in his mind. He had attained excellence in control and calm abiding, and superiority in control and calm abiding. He guarded his faculties, elephant-like in control of his passions, and was radiant, unsullied, and clear like a lake. His body was adorned with the thirty-two marks of a great being, and with the eighty minor marks, like the blossoming flower of a royal sal tree, and towering like Mount Meru, the king of mountains. His face was as calm as the sphere of the moon, [F.109.b] and radiantly clear and brilliant like the sphere of the sun. His body was proportioned like a nyagrodha tree, blazing with light and great splendor.

1.36 “Seeing him, Bhadrāsuddha developed an attitude of faith toward the Blessed One. With this attitude of faith, he thought, ‘How marvelous! How wondrously this body of the Tathāgata is adorned in its complexion and splendor. It blazes with glory, the marks of buddhahood, and clear, brilliant radiance.’ The brahmin boy Bhadrāsuddha then spoke out loud, ‘How marvelous! May I also, in the future, come to possess such a body, blazing like this in complexion, magnificence, splendor, the marks of buddhahood, and with clear, brilliant radiance!’

“After he had prayed thus, he lay on the ground and thought, ‘If in the future I shall come to possess such a body, blazing like this in complexion, magnificence, splendor, marks of buddhahood, and with clear, brilliant radiance, may the Tathāgata touch me with his foot.’

- 1.37 “Then, Ānanda, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely and perfectly enlightened Buddha Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña, learning of the noble intention of the brahmin boy Bhadraśuddha, approached him and touched him with his foot. As soon as the Tathāgata Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña had touched the brahmin boy Bhadraśuddha with his foot, at that very moment the boy attained acceptance of the fact that all phenomena are unproduced. Ānanda, the Tathāgata Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña looked behind him and addressed the monks, ‘Monks, on no account should you tread on the brahmin boy Bhadraśuddha with your feet. Why? Because he is [F.110.a] a bodhisattva mahāsattva who has accepted the fact that all phenomena are unproduced.’
- 1.38 “At that very moment, the brahmin boy Bhadraśuddha obtained the knowledge of the divine eye, knowledge of the divine ear, knowledge of the thoughts of others, and knowledge recollecting his past lives, and also accomplished miraculous powers. In the presence of the Tathāgata Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña he spoke the following fitting verses of praise:
- 1.39 “ ‘Though I roamed and searched in all the cardinal and intermediate directions,
There is no lord such as you in all the worlds.
The perfect Buddha is supreme in all realms of existence.
O great self-arisen guide, to you I pay homage.
- 1.40 “ ‘Just as the bright sun in the sky,
In all worldly realms of the cardinal and intermediate directions,
Illuminates all these worlds with its light,
So do your splendid qualities—O Buddha, to you I pay homage.
- 1.41 “ ‘Just as a lion roaring in the deep forests
Subdues the fox and all other ordinary animals,
So you, the noblest and most powerful of men,
Subdue all the great assemblies of unbelievers.
- 1.42 “ ‘The Sugata’s fair ringlet between his eyebrows,
Endlessly splendid like a hoard of silver or snow,
Illuminates all these worlds.
In all the worlds there is nobody who equals you, O Buddha.
- 1.43 “ ‘Best of beings, you possess celestial wheels
Bright and fair, with a thousand spokes and spinning rims,
On your feet: these marks cause the earth, with its mountains and forests, to tremble.
O Sage, you are unrivaled by ordinary beings.

- 1.44 “ ‘Your great knowledge discards afflictive emotions and abandons everything.
Noble One, you discovered the path of deliverance; [F.110.b]
Possessing every wealth, rich in qualities,
You array the wealth of a noble one as you please.
- 1.45 “ ‘You are comparable to the earth, and without equal as a recipient of offerings.
You have obtained mastery of all good qualities, and your moral conduct is pure.
Just as hands cannot grasp or capture space,
So too, in the worlds you possess no attachment or anger.
- 1.46 “ ‘Reaching ultimate acceptance,¹⁵ you learnt that all objects and phenomena
Are without essence, fictitious, and impure.
In all those arrogant sentient beings that migrate in saṃsāra,
You found no life force or substance.
- 1.47 “ ‘Adapting to their dispositions and actions, and knowing their thoughts,
You are a wondrous lamp that discerns them.
Since you witnessed beings carried away by the great river,
You formerly produced the power of firm strength of diligence.
- 1.48 “ ‘You possess a mind that rejects rebirth and pacifies afflictive emotions;
Your vast mind brought birth, old age, and death to an end.
Like the sphere of space you are without attachment;
Untainted by worldly qualities, you roam the three worlds.
- 1.49 “ ‘O great being, your wisdom brings illumination,
Dispelling every darkness that has gathered.
You calm the dust of attachment and dispel the darkness
Of the various stains of anger and ignorance—to you I pay homage.’
- 1.50 “Ānanda, this does not yet exhaust the miraculous displays and supernormal powers of the brahmin boy Bhadraśuddha.
“Ānanda, if you wonder whether the brahmin boy Bhadraśuddha was then, at that time, someone else, or you are of two minds about it, or doubtful, do not see him so. Why? Because the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya himself was then, at that time, the brahmin boy Bhadraśuddha, [F.111.a] who uttered these verses of praise to the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the perfectly enlightened Buddha Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña.”

- 1.51 The venerable Ānanda asked, “Blessed One, if this bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya developed acceptance so long ago of the fact that all phenomena are unproduced, why did he not quickly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha?”
- 1.52 The Blessed One replied to the venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, the bodhisattvas set in place and protect¹⁶ two things. What two things? They set in place and protect sentient beings, and they set in place and protect their buddha realms. But of these two, when formerly the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya was engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, he set in place, consecrated, and protected his buddha realm.
- 1.53 “Ānanda, when I myself was formerly engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, I set in place and protected sentient beings, and I also set in place and protected my buddha realm. Ānanda, I knew through foresight that forty-two eons after the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya entered the path I would first arouse the mind of supreme, perfect enlightenment. Ānanda, with the knowledge that, ninety-four eons after that good eon had passed, I would realize supreme, perfect enlightenment, I applied myself, Ānanda, with burning diligence [F.111.b] and quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha.
- 1.54 “Ānanda, it was by means of ten qualities that I quickly accomplished supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. What ten qualities? I abandoned and let go of all doubts, abandoned and let go of my spouse, abandoned and let go of my child, abandoned and let go of my head, abandoned and let go of my eyes, abandoned and let go of my kingdom, abandoned and let go of my wealth, abandoned and let go of my blood, abandoned and let go of my bones and marrow, and abandoned my limbs. By letting go of everything I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, it was by means of those ten qualities that I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha.
- 1.55 “Ānanda, it was also by means of a further ten qualities that I quickly accomplished supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. What ten qualities? Ānanda, I adhered to the teaching of the qualities of moral conduct, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I possessed the power of patience, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I applied ardent diligence, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I adhered to the qualities of meditation, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. [F.112.a] Ānanda, I adhered to the perfection of wisdom, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect

enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I did not abandon any sentient being in any way, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I was skillful in my means, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I treated all sentient beings equally, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I realized the teaching of emptiness, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, I realized the teaching of signlessness and wishlessness, and so I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha. Ānanda, it was by means of those ten qualities that I quickly realized supreme, perfect enlightenment and became a buddha.

1.56 “Ānanda, if you were aware of how harsh and severe were the sensations of suffering by which I realized supreme and completely perfect enlightenment, perfect buddhahood, you, Ānanda, would not be so forthright. The reason, Ānanda, is that formerly, in times gone by, there lived a prince named Giver of All Wealth, good-looking, handsome, and beautiful to behold, endowed with a supremely good complexion, excellent figure, and with the great wealth and power of a king. He was going to a pleasure grove when he saw between the villages a man afflicted with suffering and seriously ill. At this sight, he felt compassion, approached the man, and asked, [F.112.b] ‘You, sir, what are you suffering from?’

1.57 “The man said, ‘Your Highness, I have contracted an illness.’

“ ‘What will assuage your illness, my good man?’ asked the prince. ‘What shall I give you?’

“ ‘Your Highness,’ replied the man, ‘if I were to drink just enough of the blood from your body to satisfy me, my illness would be assuaged.’

1.58 “Then, Ānanda, Prince Giver of All Wealth took a sharp knife, cut himself, and gave the man the blood that drained from the wound to drink. Ānanda, as soon as the man drank it, his illness was cured. Ānanda, even though Prince Giver of All Wealth cut himself and all his blood drained out, he never had a moment’s regret. Ānanda, if you wonder whether Prince Giver of All Wealth was then, at that time, someone else, or you are of two minds about it, or doubtful, do not see him so. Why? Because I myself was then, at that time, Prince Giver of All Wealth. Ānanda, all the water of the four great oceans can be measured, but the blood that I have given to sentient beings as I sought supreme, completely perfect enlightenment cannot.

1.59 “Ānanda, formerly, in times gone by, there lived a prince named Puṣpa, good-looking, handsome, and beautiful to behold, endowed with a supremely good complexion, excellent figure, and with the great wealth and

power of a king. He was going to the site of a pleasure grove when he saw between the villages a man who had contracted dropsy, afflicted with suffering and seriously ill.

“At this sight, he felt compassion and approached the man, and asked, ‘My good man, what will assuage this illness of yours? What shall I give you?’

“The man replied, [F.113.a] ‘Your Majesty, if I were to get just enough of the marrow from your body to satisfy me, my illness would be assuaged.’

1.60 “Prince Puṣpa was satisfied and delighted; he rejoiced, and then pleasure and happiness arose in him. He beat his own body, then gouged out the marrow and smeared it on that man’s body. Ānanda, as soon as he smeared it on him, the man’s illness was cured. Ānanda, even though Prince Puṣpa beat his own body so that the marrow dripped out, he felt no regret in his mind.

1.61 “Ānanda, if you wonder whether Prince Puṣpa was then, at that time, someone else, or you are of two minds about it, or doubtful, do not see him so. Why? Because I myself was then, at that time, Prince Puṣpa. Ānanda, all the water of the four great oceans can be measured, but the marrow that I have given to sentient beings as I sought supreme, completely perfect enlightenment cannot.

1.62 “Ānanda, formerly in times gone by there lived a king named Candraprabha, good-looking, handsome and beautiful to behold, endowed with a supremely good complexion, excellent figure, and with the great wealth and power of a king. He was going to a pleasure grove, when between the villages he saw a poor, eyeless blind man, a destitute beggar. At this sight, he felt compassion.

“That man then approached King Candraprabha and said, ‘Your Majesty, you are happy. Your Majesty, you are joyful, but I suffer. I am blind; I have no eyes. I am poor and destitute. I am a beggar without refuge.’

1.63 “Then, Ānanda, King Candraprabha saw the man again, and after listening to his words again he wept, and still in tears, asked him, ‘My good man, what do you need? [F.113.b] Should I give you food or drink? A riding-mount? Jewelry? Gold, gems, pearls, or various kinds of precious things? Tell me whatever you need.’

“The man replied, ‘I beg you, please give me your eye.’

1.64 “So, Ānanda, King Candraprabha plucked out his eye and gave it to the man. But, Ānanda, although King Candraprabha had plucked out his eye and given it to the man, he did not become regretful. Ānanda, if you wonder whether King Candraprabha was then, at that time, someone else, or you are of two minds about it, or doubtful, do not see him so. Why? Because I myself was then, at that time, King Candraprabha. Ānanda, Mount Meru, the

king of mountains, can be measured, but the eyes that I have given to sentient beings as I sought supreme, completely perfect enlightenment are too great and cannot.

1.65 “Ānanda, when the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya was formerly engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, because the vehicle is easy, the entry is easy, and the path is easy,¹⁷ he perfectly accomplished supreme, perfect enlightenment. Ānanda, when the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya was formerly engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva he did not let go of his arms, legs, or marrow. He did not renounce and let go of his spouse, or his child, village, town, city, royal palace, or retinue. But, Ānanda, when the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya was formerly engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, because he fully embraced skillful means, through the easy vehicle, the easy entry, and the easy path [F.114.a] he accomplished supreme, perfect enlightenment.”

1.66 Then the venerable Ānanda asked, “Blessed One, what were the skillful means to which the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya adhered, thus accomplishing supreme, perfect enlightenment?”

The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, when formerly the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, he would drape his shawl over one shoulder, set his right knee on the ground, and put the palms of his hands together three times during the day and three times during the night. Making all the buddhas visible, he would then speak to them in these words:

1.67 “ ‘Homage to all the buddhas!
Homage to the bodhisattvas,
Those sages with the divine eye—
And to the śrāvakas, too.

1.68 “ ‘Homage to the mind of enlightenment,
Which reverses all negative rebirths,
Shows the path to higher rebirths,
And leads beings to the state without aging or death.

1.69 “ ‘Whatever negative actions I have done
Under the influence of mind,
Here in the presence of the buddhas
I confess them.

1.70 “ ‘Whatever accumulation of merit
I have produced through the three kinds of action,¹⁸
May it be the seed of my omniscience

And inexhaustible enlightenment.

- 1.71 “ ‘Whatever offerings to the buddhas
Arise in all realms throughout the ten directions,
The buddhas know and rejoice in them,
And at that I myself rejoice.
- 1.72 “ ‘I confess all negative actions.
I rejoice in all meritorious acts.
I pay homage to all the buddhas.
May I attain supreme awareness! [F.114.b]
- 1.73 “ ‘I exhort the bodhisattvas
Of all ten directions,
Who abide on the ten bodhisattva levels,
To attain supreme enlightenment.
- 1.74 “ ‘May they become truly enlightened buddhas,
Overcoming negative influences of every kind,
And then, to benefit living beings,
May they turn the wheel of the Dharma.
- 1.75 “ ‘Through the sound of the great Dharma drum,
May they bring the suffering of sentient beings to an end.
For unimaginable millions of eons,
May they teach the Dharma and continue to remain in this world.
- 1.76 “ ‘I beg you, best of all humans,
Look upon those who are trapped in the swamp of desire,
And tightly bound by the cords of craving,
Fettered in every kind of bond.
- 1.77 “ ‘Buddhas, do not belittle
Those whose minds are defiled,
But with loving intent toward all sentient beings,
Save them from the sea of existence.
- 1.78 “ ‘May I train in the footsteps
Of the perfect buddhas—those present now,
Those of the past, and those of the future—
And may I engage in the conduct of the bodhisattvas.
- 1.79 “ ‘May I complete the six perfections
And liberate beings of the six realms.
May I realize the six supernormal powers

And reach supreme enlightenment.

- 1.80 “ ‘Unproduced and non-arising,
Without self-nature or location,
Neither mental cognition, nor substance—
May I realize the teaching of emptiness.
- 1.81 “ ‘Just like the Buddha, the great sage,
May I realize the teaching of non-self:
A sentient being does not exist, nor does a living being,
Nor does an individual, or a person.¹⁹
- 1.82 “ ‘May I not dwell on there being anything substantial,
A belief in a self, or what I take to be mine,
But in order to make all sentient beings happy,
May I give everything away without miserliness.
- 1.83 “ ‘Since material objects do not really exist,
May my wealth be spontaneously accomplished.
Since all material objects decay,
May I complete the perfection of generosity.
- 1.84 “ ‘Possessing conduct that is flawless,
Conduct that is perfect,
And conduct that is without arrogance, [F.115.a]
May I complete the perfection of moral conduct.
- 1.85 “ ‘Like the elements of earth, water, fire,
And wind, not dwelling on anything,²⁰
With patience and²¹ free of anger,
May I complete the perfection of patience.
- 1.86 “ ‘Through assiduous application of diligence,
May I have constant enthusiasm without laziness,
And with strength of body and mind,
May I complete the perfection of diligence.
- 1.87 “ ‘Through magic-like meditative concentration,
Meditative concentration of bravery,
And vajra-like meditative concentration,
May I complete the perfection of meditation.
- 1.88 “ ‘Actualizing the three gates to liberation,
The sameness of the three times,
And the threefold knowledge,²²

May I complete the perfection of wisdom.

- 1.89 “ ‘May I be praised by all the buddhas,
And blaze with light and splendor;
Through the diligence of a bodhisattva,
May my intention be fulfilled.
- 1.90 “ ‘Thus engaging in such conduct,
May I, who am known as Maitreya,
Complete the six perfections
And dwell on the ten bodhisattva levels.’
- 1.91 “Ānanda, those are the skillful means through which the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya, by adhering to them, through the easy vehicle, the easy entry, and the easy path, perfectly accomplished supreme, perfect, and complete enlightenment. Ānanda, when the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya was formerly engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, he thought to himself, ‘How I wish that sentient beings, having less desire, anger, and ignorance, might acquire the path of the ten virtuous actions! In the future, may I perfectly accomplish supreme, perfect, and complete enlightenment and become a buddha.’ It was thus that he consecrated his buddha realm.
- 1.92 “Ānanda, such a time and period will come about; then sentient beings will become less desiring, angry, [F.115.b] and ignorant, and keep to the path of the ten virtuous actions. After that, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya, due to the power of his prayer, will perfectly accomplish supreme, perfect, and completely enlightened buddhahood.
- 1.93 “Ānanda, when I formerly engaged in the conduct of a bodhisattva, I made this prayer: ‘When the world is beset with the five degenerations, sentient beings will have great desire, anger, and ignorance. Desire, anger, and ignorance will all increase. Beings will desire and crave irreligious things. They will be overcome by fearsome desire, and adopt false doctrines. They will despise their fathers, their mothers, their cousins, and their siblings, their partners, their relatives, noble beings, abbots, spiritual teachers, themselves, and others. These people will be filthy, wild, and stupid. How wonderful it will be if I can perfectly realize supreme, perfect enlightenment and become a buddha among them!’
- 1.94 “Having lived in such a terrible epoch, Ānanda, I have kindled great compassion. Today, when I enter villages, cities, towns, districts and provinces, and the surroundings of royal palaces with great compassion, as soon as I teach the Dharma I am slandered and reviled, harshly abused, and told not to create a gathering. Ānanda, it is even said that I am a nihilist, or that I am an eternalist. They say that those in my retinue have many desires, and that their desires are great. When I enter into houses, earth is thrown at

me. I am given food mixed with poison. They even have [F.116.a] bonfires made for me.²³ So it is. Although I am a buddha, I am denigrated as cohabiting with so-called 'beautiful women' and the like. Ānanda, I kindled great compassion, and with great compassion, I now teach the Dharma to such sentient beings."

1.95 The venerable Ānanda then said to the Blessed One, "The Blessed One who teaches the Dharma to such sentient beings, converting those not previously converted by the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the perfectly enlightened Buddha, has taken on a great burden, and undergone hardships."

The Blessed One replied to the venerable Ānanda, "Exactly, Ānanda. It is just as you have said. Ānanda, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the perfectly enlightened Buddha has tamed those not previously tamed, taken on a great burden, and himself endowed with every virtuous quality, undergone hardship by teaching the Dharma to such sentient beings. Why? Because this is how much he was gripped by great compassion."

1.96 The venerable Ānanda then exclaimed, "That the Blessed One should bestow such a Dharma discourse, that I should hear this Dharma discourse, and hear this topic from the Blessed One, the best of men, is hair-raising and amazing! Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma discourse? How should it be remembered?"

The Blessed One replied, "From now onward, Ānanda, you should remember this Dharma discourse as 'The Former Prayer that is Truly Noble.' You should also remember it as 'The True Arising of the Tathāgata.' You should also remember it as 'The Arising of the Intention of Enlightenment.' You should also remember it as 'The Question of Maitreya.' "

1.97 When the Blessed One had spoken, the venerable Ānanda and the bodhisattva Maitreya, together with the five hundred monks [F.116.b] and the entire retinue, as well as the worlds of gods and men, demi-gods and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised the Blessed One's words.

1.98 *This concludes The Question of Maitreya, the forty-first of the one hundred thousand sections of the Dharma discourse known as The Noble Great Heap of Jewels.*

c.

Colophon

- c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi, together with the chief editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

D Degé (*sde dge*) Kangyur

H Lhasa (*zhol*) Kangyur

N Narthang (*snar thang*) Kangyur

S Stok Palace (*stog pho brang bris ma*) Kangyur

n.

NOTES

- n.1 In D this title, included within the text, is preceded by this introductory sentence: “From *The Noble Dharma Discourse, the Great Heap of Jewels* in one hundred thousand sections, section 41: ‘The Noble Elucidation of the Question of Maitreya’ in one fascicle” (*‘phags pa dkon mchog brtsegs pa chen po’i chos kyi rnam grangs le’u stong phrag brgya pa las le’u bzhi bcu rtsa gcig pa ste / ‘phags pa byams pas zhus pa lung bstan pa / bam po gcig pa*).
- n.2 A fragment of the Stein collection, published in 1911 by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, was identified as part of this sūtra (corresponding to D, F.108.b–110.a) by Hisashi Matsumura in 1993 (see bibliography).
- n.3 They are sūtra numbers 41 and 42 in the Tibetan version of the Ratnakūṭa collection, but are numbered 85 and 86 respectively in the Tōhoku catalogue of the Degé Kangyur as a whole.
- n.4 See [Roberts and Bower \(2018\), chapter 1 \(1.88\)](#) (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh113.html#UT22084-051-001-291>).
- n.5 See [Dharmachakra Translation Committee \(2021\)](#) (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh198.html>).
- n.6 See [Yao \(2021\), chapter 3 \(3.175\)](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh1-6.html#UT22084-001-006-1143>).
- n.7 See [Kīrtimukha Translation Group \(2021\)](#) (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh149.html>).
- n.8 This inclusion of Indradeva and Varuṇadeva, Vedic deities, among the assembly of attendant bodhisattvas is unusual. It is, however, paralleled in another Ratnakūṭa sūtra, the *Tathāgatacintyaḡuhyaniṛdeśa* (Toh 47).
- n.9 These eight, of course, comprise the noble eightfold path.

- n.10 This section outlines the system of the eight meditative absorptions (Skt. *dhyāna*; Pali *jhāna*), which are progressively deeper states of meditation. The first four are termed “form” (*rūpa*) *jhānas* because the absorption takes place within the fine material sphere (Skt. *rūpadhātu*; Pali *rūpaloka*). The final four are called “formless” (*arūpa*) because they take place in the formless spheres (Skt. *arūpyadhātu*; Pali *arūpaloka*), and are also known as the four attainments (*samāpatti*). For a presentation of the *jhāna* system followed in the present-day Theravāda, see Gunaratana (1988 pp. 9-20.)
- n.11 This is a citation from the *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* (*Perfection of Wisdom in 18,000 Lines*), (Toh 11, vol. 29, F.162b). The preceding passage is also found there.
- n.12 This is a fifth accomplishment sometimes added to the four formless absorptions.
- n.13 This odd, seemingly culturally Himalayan simile does not appear to be due to any corruption in the text: N and H merely offer *yul ring(s)* instead of *D yun ring*. Indeed, the same simile is found in other Kangyur texts, again in the context of guarding moral conduct.
- n.14 The Sanskrit name of this tathāgata is attested in the Sanskrit fragment mentioned in the introduction (see also Matsumura 1993). The name is also a component of the names of two of the 35 “tathāgatas of confession,” found in a liturgy much used in the Tibetan tradition and extracted from the *Vinaya-viniścayaopālipariṣcchā* (Toh 68); the Tibetan of the equivalent part of the names in the latter text is slightly different, *’od zer rnam par rol pa mngon par mkhyen pa* (see Python 1973, pp. 34 and 100).
- n.15 This translation of *bzod pa zad kyis gtugs pa* is tentative.
- n.16 The Tibetan terms provisionally translated here as “set in place” and “protect” are *bkod pa* and *yongs su gzung ba*.
- n.17 We have not found the phrase *theg pa bde ba ’jug pa bde ba lam bde ba* attested elsewhere.
- n.18 *las rnam pa gsum*, “the three [kinds of] actions” is interpreted by Dharmabhadra and Ngawang Khedrup to mean meritorious actions of body, speech, and mind, but by Padma Karpo to be meritorious actions causing rebirth as a human, meritorious actions causing rebirth as a god, and “non-transferring” actions (*mi g.yo ba’i las*) causing rebirth in the two higher realms (of form and no-form).

- n.19 “Person” here is a translation of *gso ba*.
- n.20 The commentaries differ considerably in their interpretations of these two lines, with Padma Karpo emphasizing simply the inanimate nature of the four elements, and most of the others detailing particular qualities of patience for which each of the four is a simile. Despite the syntax, most agree that “not dwelling” (*mi gnas pa*) refers principally to the wind element. The translation here is an attempt to remain open to more than one interpretation.
- n.21 D and most other Kangyurs have *bzod pa’am* here in Toh 85, but *bzod pa’ang* in the versions in the Dhāraṇī section (Toh 1096) and in the Tengyur (Toh 4378), which makes more sense; S has simply *bzod pa*.
- n.22 According to Tāranātha’s commentary, the threefold knowledge (*rig pa gsum*) comprises (1) knowledge of the whole of the past (*sngon gyi mtha’ rig pa*), (2) knowledge of the whole of the future (*phyi ma’i mtha’ rig pa*), and (3) knowledge of the exhaustion of defilements (*zag zad rig pa*); the other commentaries, however, take the three kinds of knowledge as knowledge of the minds, mental events, and their causes, of all sentient beings in the past, present, and future.
- n.23 One such story is recounted in the *Śrīguptasūtra* (*dpal sbas kyi mdo*, Toh 217); see bibliography. For a translation, see Liljenberg (2021).

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for Sanskrit names and terms ·

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in the Sanskrit manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other Sanskrit manuscripts of the Kangyur or Tengyur.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionaries.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where Tibetan-Sanskrit relationship is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source Unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 Abandoner of Unfavorable Rebirths

ngan song spong

རྒྱལ་ལོ་སྤྱོད་

—

g.2 Abhijñāpuṣpasuparipūrṇa

mngon par shes pa'i me tog shin tu rgyas pa

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པའི་མེ་ཏོག་ཤིན་ཏུ་རྒྱས་པ།

abhijñāpuṣpasuparipūrṇa

g.3 Amogharāja

don yod rgyal po

དོན་ཡོད་རྒྱལ་པོ།

amogharāja

Close Śrāvaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.4 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

ānanda

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A major śrāvaka disciple and personal attendant of the Buddha Śākyamuni during the last twenty-five years of his life. He was a cousin of the Buddha (according to the Mahāvastu, he was a son of Śuklodana, one of the brothers of King Śuddhodana, which means he was a brother of Devadatta; other sources say he was a son of Amṛtodana, another brother of King Śuddhodana, which means he would have been a brother of Aniruddha).

Ānanda, having always been in the Buddha's presence, is said to have memorized all the teachings he heard and is celebrated for having recited all the Buddha's teachings by memory at the first council of the Buddhist saṅgha, thus preserving the teachings after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The phrase "Thus did I hear at one time," found at the beginning of the sūtras, usually stands for his recitation of the teachings. He became a patriarch after the passing of Mahākāśyapa.

g.5 Anupalambhamanasikāra

dmigs pa med pa yid la byed pa

དམིགས་པ་མེད་པ་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ།

anupalambhamanasikāra

g.6 Aśvajit

rta thul

རྟ་ཐུལ།

aśvajit

One of the first five disciples of the Buddha.

g.7 Avalokiteśvara

spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱུག

avalokiteśvara

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the “eight close sons of the Buddha,” he is also known as the bodhisattva who embodies compassion. In certain tantras, he is also the lord of the three families, where he embodies the compassion of the buddhas. In Tibet, he attained great significance as a special protector of Tibet, and in China, in female form, as Guanyin, the most important bodhisattva in all of East Asia.

g.8 Bhadrāsuddha

bzang dag

བཟང་དག

bhadrāsuddha

g.9 Bhadrīka

bzang ldan

བཟང་ལྷན།

bhadrīka

One of the first five disciples of the Buddha.

g.10 calm abiding

zhi gnas

ཞི་གནས།

śamatha

Meditation technique to calm the mind.

g.11 Candraprabha

zla 'od

ཟླ་འོད།

candraprabha

g.12 Country of the Bhargas

yul bha rga

ཡུལ་ཐུག་ཀྱི།

bharga

g.13 emptiness

stong pa nyid

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

śūnyatā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Emptiness denotes the ultimate nature of reality, the total absence of inherent existence and self-identity with respect to all phenomena.

According to this view, all things and events are devoid of any independent, intrinsic reality that constitutes their essence. Nothing can be said to exist independent of the complex network of factors that gives rise to its origination, nor are phenomena independent of the cognitive processes and mental constructs that make up the conventional framework within which their identity and existence are posited. When all levels of conceptualization dissolve and when all forms of dichotomizing tendencies are quelled through deliberate meditative deconstruction of conceptual elaborations, the ultimate nature of reality will finally become manifest. It is the first of the three gateways to liberation.

g.14 four great oceans

rgya mtsho chen po bzhi

བླ་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི།

catvaro samudrāḥ

Four oceans believed to surround the central mountain, Mt. Meru, in Indian cosmology.

g.15 Gavāṃpati

ba lang bdag

བ་ལང་བདག་

gavāṃpati

Close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.16 Gayākāśyapa

ga ya 'od srung

ག་ཡ་འོད་སྤྱང་།

gayākāśyapa

Close Śrāvaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.17 Giver of All Wealth

nor thams cad phyin pa

ནོར་ཐམས་ཅད་ཕྱིན་པ།

—

g.18 God

lha

ལྷ།

deva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Cognate with the English term *divine*, the devas are most generally a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend and celebrate the teachings of Śākyamuni and other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In Buddhist cosmology the devas occupy the highest of the five or six “destinies” (*gati*) of saṃsāra among which beings take rebirth. The devas reside in the *devalokas*, “heavens” that traditionally number between twenty-six and twenty-eight and are divided between the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), material realm (*rūpadhātu*), and immaterial realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). A being attains rebirth among the devas either through meritorious deeds (in the desire realm) or the attainment of subtle meditative states (in the material and immaterial realms). While rebirth among the devas is considered favorable, it is ultimately a transitory state from which beings will fall when the conditions that lead to rebirth there are exhausted. Thus, rebirth in the god realms is regarded as a diversion from the spiritual path.

g.19 Indradeva

dbang po'i lha

དབང་པོའི་ལྷ།

indradeva

g.20 Indraśrī

dbang po'i dpal

དབང་པོའི་དཔལ།

indraśrī

g.21 Jaṅghā Kāśyapa

byin pa 'od srung

ཐིན་པ་འོད་སྤྱང་།

jaṅghā kāśyapa

Close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.22 Jyotivikrīḍitābhijña

snang bas rnam par rol pa'i mngon par shes pa

སྒྲུང་བས་རྣམ་པར་རོལ་པའི་མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ།

jyotivikrīḍitābhijña

g.23 Kaunḍinya

kauN+Din+ya

ཀོའྲིཏྱ།

kaunḍinya

One of the first five disciples of the Buddha.

g.24 Kṣetraviśodhana

zhing rnam par sbyong

ཞིང་རྣམ་པར་སྤྱོད་།

kṣetraviśodhana

g.25 Kusumaśrī

me tog dpal

མེ་ཏོག་དཔལ།

kusumaśrī

g.26 Mahākāśyapa

'od srung chen po

འོད་སྤྱང་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākāśyapa

Close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.27 Mahānāman

ming chen

མིང་ཆེན།

mahānāman

One of the first five disciples of the Buddha.

g.28 Mahāsthāmaprāpta

mthu chen thob

མཐུ་ཆེན་ཐོབ།

mahāsthāmaprāpta

g.29 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Mañjuśrī is one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha” and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. In addition to the epithet Kumārabhūta, which means “having a youthful form,” Mañjuśrī is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.30 Maudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ།

maudgalyāyana

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, paired with Śāriputra. He was renowned for his miraculous powers. His family clan was descended from Mudgala, hence his name Maudgalyāyana, “the son of Mudgala’s descendants.” Respectfully referred to as Mahāmaudgalyāyana.

g.31 meditative absorption

bsam gtan

བསམ་གཏན།

dhyāna

Four levels of meditation within the Form Realm.

See also [n.10](#).

g.32 Merukūṭa

lhun po brtsegs

ལུན་པོ་བརྩམས།

merukūṭa

g.33 Mount Śuśumāra

chu srin byis pa gsod lta bu'i ri

ལུ་སྤྱིན་གྱིས་པ་གསོད་ལྟ་བུའི་རི།

śuśumāragiri

Sometimes has the alternative Sanskrit spelling Śiśumāragiri.

g.34 Mṛdusvara

sgra dbyangs snyan

སྒ་དབྱངས་སྟན།

mṛdusvara

g.35 Mṛgaśiras

ri dags mgo

རི་དགས་མགོ།

mṛgaśiras

Close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.36 Nadikāśyapa

chu klung 'od srung

ལུ་ཁྲུང་འོད་སྟུང་།

nadikāśyapa

Close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.37 Nanda

dga' bo

དག་འཕོ།

nanda

g.38 Nimimdhara

sa 'dzin

ས་འཛིན།

nimiṃdhara

g.39 noble eightfold path

'phags lam yan lag brgyad

འཕགས་ལམ་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད།

āryaṣṭāṅgamārga

g.40 nyagrodha tree

shing nya gro dha

ཤིང་ཉ་གོ་ན།

nyagrodha

A tree, *Ficus benghalensis*, native to the Indian subcontinent, that can cover large areas by putting down aerial roots that become subsidiary trunks.

g.41 Parvatarāja

ri rgyal

རི་རྒྱལ།

parvatarāja

g.42 perfection of wisdom

shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa

ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

prajñāpāramitā

The sixth of the six perfections.

g.43 Prasādavat

dad ldan

དད་ལྷན།

prasādavat

g.44 Pratibhānakūṭa

spobs pa brtsegs

སྤྱོད་ས་པ་བརྟེགས།

pratibhānakūṭa

g.45 Pratibhānasampad

spobs pa phun sum tshogs

སྤྱོད་ས་པ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས།

pratibhānasampad

g.46 Pūrṇa

gang po

གང་པོ།

pūrṇa

Close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.47 Puṣpa

me tog

མེ་ཏོག།

puṣpa

g.48 Rāhula

sgra gcan zin

སྒྲ་གཅན་ཟེན།

rāhula

g.49 Ratnakesarin

rin chen ze ba can

རིན་ཆེན་ཟེ་བ་ཅན།

ratnakesarin

g.50 Ratnaketu

rin chen tog

རིན་ཆེན་ཏོག།

ratnaketu

g.51 sal tree

shing sA la

ཤིང་སྐྱ་ལ།

śāla

A hardwood tree, *Shorea robusta*, widespread on the Indian subcontinent.

g.52 Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ཤ་རི་བུ།

śāriputra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, he was renowned for his discipline and for having been praised by the Buddha as foremost of the wise (often paired with Maudgalyāyana, who was praised as foremost in the capacity for miraculous powers). His father, Tiṣya, to honor Śāriputra's mother, Śārikā, named him Śāradvatīputra, or, in its contracted form, Śāriputra, meaning "Śārikā's Son."

g.53 Scourer of the Hell-dwellers

sems can dmyal ba skems

སེམས་ཅན་དུལ་བ་སྐྱེས་པ།

—

g.54 signlessness

mtshan ma med pa

མཚན་མ་མེད་པ།

animitta

Meditative concentration which views the five aggregates, the basis for the conception of a self, as faulty; the second of the three doors of liberation.

g.55 sphere of neither perception nor non-perception

'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched

འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་མིན་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatanam

Fourth of the four formless absorptions.

g.56 sphere of nothingness

ci yang med pa'i skye mched

ཅི་ཡང་མེད་པའི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

akiñcanyāyatanam

Third of the four formless absorptions.

g.57 sphere of the infinity of consciousness

rnam shes mtha' yas skye mched

རྣམ་ཤེས་མཐའ་ཡས་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

vijñānānantyāyatanam

Second of the four formless absorptions.

g.58 sphere of the infinity of space

nam mkha' mtha' yas skye mched

ནམ་མཁའ་མཐའ་ཡས་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

ākāśānantyāyatanaṃ

First of the four formless absorptions.

g.59 Sthiramati

blo gros brtan

སྐྱོ་བྱོས་བརྟན།

sthiramati

g.60 Sumati

blo gros bzang po

སྐྱོ་བྱོས་བཟང་པོ།

sumati

Name shared by a close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha, and by a bodhisattva.

g.61 Upananda

nye dga'

ཉེདགའ།

upananda

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A member of the Śākya clan and śrāvaka disciple of the Buddha, part of the notorious “group of six” monks who often appear in the vinaya texts to exemplify certain wrong behaviors.

(Please note that in some of the texts listed here, due to the lack of any supportive information supplied along with the name, it is not possible to be completely certain that it refers exactly to the same person. However, given the probability of being the same person, and the absence of conflicting information, these have been gathered here.)

g.62 Uruvilva Kāśyapa

lteng rgyas 'od srung

ལྷེང་རྒྱས་འོད་སྤྱང་།

uruvilva kāśyapa

Close Śravaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.63 Vardhamānamati

blo gros 'phel

བློ་གྲོས་འཕེལ།

vardhamānamati

g.64 Varuṇadeva

chu lha

ཐུ་ལྷ།

varuṇadeva

g.65 Vaṣpa

rlangs pa

རླངས་པ།

vaṣpa

One of the first five disciples of the Buddha.

g.66 Vimāla

dri ma med

དྲི་མ་མེད།

vimala

Close Śrāvaka disciple of the Buddha.

g.67 Viśālamati

blo gros yangs pa

བློ་གྲོས་ཡངས་པ།

viśālamati

g.68 Vulture Peak Mountain

bya rgod phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྒོད་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

grḍhrakūtaparvata

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Grḍhrakūṭa, literally Vulture Peak, was a hill located in the kingdom of Magadha, in the vicinity of the ancient city of Rājagṛha (modern-day Rajgir, in the state of Bihar, India), where the Buddha bestowed many sūtras, especially the Great Vehicle teachings, such as the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras. It continues to be a sacred pilgrimage site for Buddhists to this day.

g.69 wishlessness

smon pa med pa

སྤྱན་པ་མེད་པ།

apraṇihita

Meditative concentration which views nirvāṇa, which is the complete pacification of the aggregates; the third of the Three Doors of Liberation.